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ABSTRACT

The publication is designed primarily for use in teaching students about careers and the importance of work, with special emphasis on exploring agricultural careers. It is written at an appropriate reading level for most students in grades 7 and up; it may be used by the instructor as a resource document. The booklet is designed to answer the following questions: (1) What is work, the "world of work," the agricultural world of work? (2) What is the distinction between careers, occupations, and jobs? (3) Why do people work? (4) How is level of living related to work? (5) How do people view work? (6) Why should youth study about work? (7) Why is it necessary to plan a career? (8) What is career education? (Author/AJ)

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Exploring Agricultural Careers

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORK

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Preface

All youth, at one time or the other, begin to give serious consideration to life goals, especially those involving work. This is a universal concern in the United States. In recent years, there has been a trend toward providing information and experiences about work. These are designed to develop a basic knowledge of work so that when a decision is made it will be one based on adequate information.

This booklet is for the purpose of providing certain general information about the "world of work." Emphasis is given to certain broad areas of agricultural occupations. Many youth are interested in pursuing agricultural work as a career. Additional information about many agricultural careers can be obtained by reviewing the publications in the "References" section at the end of this booklet.

Table of Contents

Preface ii

To The Teacher iv

Introduction 1

What Is Work? The "World of Work?"
The "Agricultural World of Work?" 2

What Is The Distinction Between Careers, Occupations, and Jobs? . 6

Why Do People Work? 7

How Is Level of Living Related to Work? 8

How Do People View Work? 11

Why Should Youth Study About Work? 13

Why Is it Necessary to Plan a Career? 16

What Is Career Education? 17

Questions to Discuss 18

Activities to Perform 18

References 19

To The Teacher

The publication presented here is designed primarily for use in teaching students about careers and the importance of work. It is written at an appropriate reading level for most students in grades seven and up. Teachers involved in providing instruction in exploring agricultural careers may find it beneficial to provide multiple copies for students to read. Otherwise, it may be used by the instructor as a resource document.

The content of this publication is designed to be used in conjunction with Exploring Agricultural Careers: A Curriculum Guide for Agricultural Education, published by the Agricultural Education Program, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The following information is given to assist the teacher in correlating it with the Curriculum Guide:

Major Area: I. Exploring the World of Work

Unit I: Our Working World

Problem Area: (1) Determining the importance of work in our economy

Introduction

How important is work to you? It is possible that you have had a job, perhaps one in agriculture. If you have, you may view work as a means of earning money. If you have not, you may view work as "a necessary evil" or as something that other people do. Regardless of how you view work, you may not realize the importance of it in your life. The things that you have and enjoy each day are the results of work. There must be reasons why work is important. Read further and find out for yourself.

This booklet is designed to answer the following questions about work:

1. What is work? The "world of work?" The "agricultural world of work?"
2. What is the distinction between careers, occupations, and jobs?
3. Why do people work?
4. How is level of living related to work?
5. How do people view work?
6. Why should youth study about work?
7. Why is it necessary to plan a career?
8. What is career education?

1. What is work? The "world of work?" The "agricultural world of work?"

"Work" has various meanings. It is frequently used when talking about "occupations" and "jobs." People commonly ask each other about their work. In a broad sense, work refers to what an adult spends most of his time doing. It is the major focus of one's activities and energy. It is usually the way one earns a living, but not always. For example, the major focus of the energy of a houseperson* is to maintain a home. No pay is received for this activity; yet it consumes a lot of time.

Work is also said to be "human effort devoted to production." Goods and services are produced. Goods include food produced by farmers, feed made by millers, machinery made by manufacturers, and all of the other tangible things that are a part of our daily lives. Services are intangible. Examples of services in agriculture include the work of persons in veterinary medicine, farriery (horseshoeing), and custom farm operations. In these occupations, one does something for the customer, but no new product changes hands.

The term "world of work" is also commonly used. It includes all of the jobs, and the activities that relate to them, in which people are employed. With most people, employment in the world of work is the means of earning money to pay for the necessities and luxuries in life. Everyone who works is a part of the world of work: foresters, newspaper delivery boys, waiters, welders, and engineers are a few. Persons in the world of work have careers, occupations, and jobs. There are 15 clusters, or groups, of occupations in the world of work, as follows:

Agriculture(includes agribusiness, natural resources, and environmental protection)

*Formerly known as housewife.

Health

Communication and media

Marine science

Transportation

Fine arts and humanities

Hospitality and recreation

Public service

Business and office

Environment

Manufacturing

Personal services

Marketing and distribution

Construction

Consumer and homemaking

Sometimes the term "agricultural world of work" is used. This includes all of the occupational activities in the broad area of agriculture as found on farms, in agribusinesses, and related areas. There are eight areas of occupations commonly included in the agricultural world of work: agricultural production, agricultural products/processing, natural resources, forestry, ornamental horticulture, agricultural mechanics and environmental protection.

Agricultural Production. Occupations in agricultural production, commonly known as farming, involve the growing of plants and animals. A worker in this area must be skilled in using land, water, chemicals, machinery, and other inputs so that farm commodities are produced at the least cost. Skills in mechanics, financial management, plant and animal science, and other areas are needed. Workers in this area may own their own farms or work as hired persons on farms

owned by other people. Farmers depend very heavily on agribusiness workers for supplies and services and to market the crops and livestock grown.

Agricultural Supplies/Services. These occupations focus on producing the chemicals, seed, animal medicines, and the like, needed by farmers. Agricultural supplies and services are of great importance to farmers. The farmers of today could not begin to reach the current level of production without supplies and services. A few examples of occupations in this area are: agricultural supplies salesman, feed mill worker, fertilizer warehouse worker, veterinarian, fertilizer truck driver, and sheep shearer.

Agricultural Mechanics. Occupations in this area focus on the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of agricultural machines. Many of the increases in farm efficiency are due to the use of machinery. The range of occupations in this area is from those with low skill requirements to those with very high education requirements. Examples of occupations include agricultural engineer, agricultural machinery mechanic, agricultural machinery mechanic's helper, agricultural machinery operator, and agricultural machinery salesperson.

Agricultural Products/Processing. Workers in this area are involved in marketing, inspecting, and processing farm products. The occupations are very important in making available to consumers the kinds and forms of goods desired. Examples of occupations include those concerned with both food and nonfood products. Occupations in the food area include dairy plant worker, food technologist, grain sampler, livestock buyer, meat cutter, poultry inspector, and produce buyer. Occupations in which the workers are concerned with nonfood products are illustrated by tobacco grader, seed analyst, and cotton classer.

Natural Resources. Natural resources occupations are concerned with maintaining and improving natural resources, such as soil, water, fish, plants, and wildlife. Most of the occupations in this area involve working outdoors. The level of work ranges from occupations requiring very little skill or experience to those requiring considerable amounts. Examples include camp manager, fish hatchery worker, game warden, park attendant, soil conservationist, and wildlife biologist.

Forestry. Occupations in forestry are concerned with producing, managing, harvesting, and utilizing trees and tree products. The efficient production of lumber, paper, and related products, requires workers who are skilled and competent in their work. Different kinds of skills are required. Mechanical skills are needed in some occupations to operate chain saws, tractors, trucks, and sawmill equipment. A few of the occupations are forester, grader, logger, timber cruiser, and tree nursery worker.

Ornamental Horticulture. This area includes occupations concerned with the growth and use of plants for ornamental purposes. Several specialized areas are found in ornamental horticulture, such as greenhouse operation, nursery management, landscaping, and turf management. Examples of occupations are floral designer, tree pruner, groundskeeper, greenhouse assistant, and nursery worker.

Environmental Protection. The occupations in this area are concerned with protecting the environment. Many of the occupations are in water treatment, wastewater treatment and management, and air pollution control. This is an emerging area and has been included as a part of agriculture for only a short time. Several occupations in environmental protection are water treatment operator, air pollution control inspector, and wastewater treatment operator.

2. What is the distinction between careers, occupations, and jobs?

A career is the course of a persons's life as related to the world of work. It is similar to a vocation. Some people say that a career is a "calling" to a particular business or profession. People may pursue careers in the broad areas of medicine, education, agriculture, and the like. A career may involve several different occupations. For example, in a career in agribusiness a person may start as a loading dock worker, advance to farm supplies salesperson, then to assistant manager, and finally to manager. All of these occupations are in the same career area--agriculture. Yet each is a different occupation and involves different activities and responsibilities. Experience and additional training may be required to advance. Also advancements are given to those who have merited them through hard work.

Distinction is usually made between occupations and jobs. Several persons may have the same occupation but a different job. A job is any definite task, usually performed for pay. Some professional jobs are referred to as "positions." The word "job" implies site and specific function or duty. Take, for example, the case of two agricultural mechanics. Their occupations are the same but their jobs might differ in several ways:

1. One of the agricultural mechanics could be employed in one city and the other in another city. Hence, their jobs would not be the same.
2. The two agricultural mechanics could be employed at the same repair site but performing different tasks.
3. One of the agricultural mechanics could be unemployed. He has an occupation but not a job.

Some people are not monetarily paid for their work. The importance of work cannot always be measured by whether or not money is involved. A good example is

the occupation of houseperson. Work is very definitely involved in managing and caring for a home. This kind of work is important to the well-being of a family. Pay for the houseperson is in the form of intangible rewards that hopefully come from the satisfaction of a well-kept and properly-managed home.

3. Why do people work?

People work for various reasons. The average person works about 40 hours a week and has two weeks off each year for vacation. This means that 2,000 hours are spent working every year. Some people work more than 40 hours per week. There must be some reason why people spend so many hours working. When questioned, most people indicate that they work for pay. There are, however, other reasons why people work. These involve the meeting of certain needs.

Physical Needs (Food, Clothing, and Housing)

The money earned by working purchases food, clothing, and shelter. These are the necessities of life. Food claims approximately one-fourth of the money required for physical needs. It should be noted that the proportion of money spent for food has declined in recent years. A few years ago one-third or more of the money earned was spent for food. Also, the proportion of income required for food is lower in the United States than other countries. On the average, more money is now available to buy clothing, housing, entertainment, and recreation than previously. The amount of money available for physical needs depends upon the amount of pay received. Pay varies with the kind of work and productivity on the job.

Other Needs (Recognition, Achievement, Self-esteem, and Social Activities)

People have needs other than those which money will buy. Work serves to fulfill those needs. Most people want to be recognized, to feel important, and to achieve.

Work provides an opportunity for recognition. It is obtained when a job is well-done. Recognition comes in the form of respect from fellow workers, employers, and the general public. Many agribusinesses have incentive plans to reward good work. Employee appreciation in the form of awards for years of service and improved efficiency provides recognition.

A person feels important when he works hard and achieves goals. A feeling of importance is related to self-esteem. Self-esteem is the respect one has for himself. Knowing that a job has been performed well results in personal satisfaction. For example, a farmer can receive great personal satisfaction from knowing that he has used his skill, knowledge, and managerial ability in producing a farm commodity.

Everyone wants to achieve. To achieve one must have goals to work toward. If one does not have goals he may wander aimlessly and achieve very little. Achievement may come in various ways. Normally, promotions are associated with achievement in agribusiness. Achievement as a farm manager is measured by the amount of profit made or expansion of the farming operation.

Work is a social arrangement. It aids in meeting the social and psychological needs of man. People want to be a part of something. By working, most people are a part of a company, department, or work crew. Friends are frequently found at work. Social activities after work hours may involve fellow workmen. Many housepersons prefer to work full-time or part-time outside the home. Such work makes life more interesting and provides the opportunity of keeping in touch with the world of work. It also provides additional income for a family.

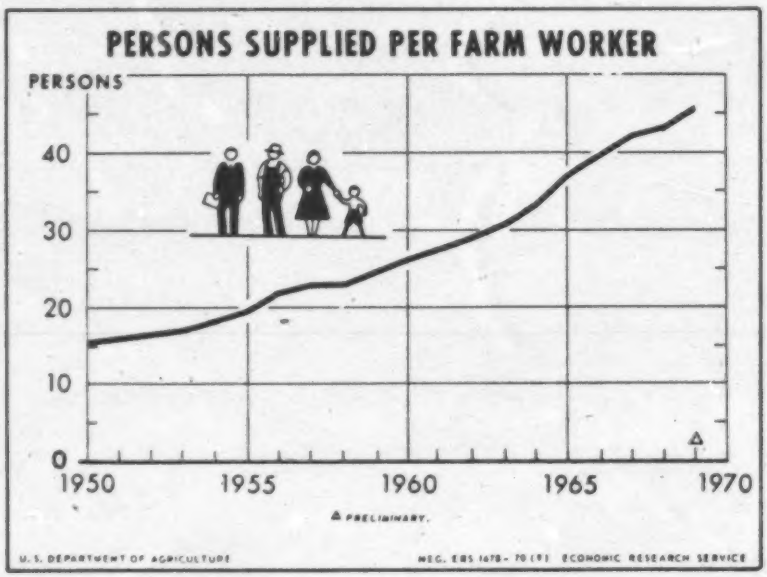
4. How is level of living related to work?

The way or style in which people live is their level of living. Some of the things determining the level at which people live are the kinds of houses,

clothes, food, and social and recreational activities available to them. Work contributes to level of living in two ways: (1) the level at which all of the people in a nation live and (2) the level at which an individual or family lives.

Level of Living in the Nation

Life in the United States has changed considerably since the days of the pioneers. This change has been closely related to agricultural productivity. In earlier days practically everyone lived on the land. Almost everything a family needed was grown at home on the farm. Today, a relatively small percentage of people live on farms. The total labor force in the United States is now almost 85 million persons. Approximately 20 percent of this number work directly in agricultural occupations, with only 5 percent employed in farming. One farmer produces enough food and fiber for himself and 47 other people. If consideration is given to the agricultural products that are exported, one farmer produces enough for more than 50 people. An additional 20 percent of the workforce is supportive of agriculture in one way or another.



The affluent life which is enjoyed by most Americans is possible only because of the productive farmers. By having a low percentage of persons employed in farming, millions of persons are released from the production of the necessities for man, such as food, to produce instruments of pleasure in the form of automobiles, television sets, and many other devices prominent in our daily lives.

Nations with low agricultural productivity usually have low levels of living. More persons are required to produce the necessities. Hence, fewer people are available to produce the luxuries.

It should be remembered that much of the productivity of the farms is due to agricultural research and education. Research is conducted to develop improved methods of production. Education is necessary to acquaint farmers with the findings of research. Research and education in agricultural areas have been and will continue to be important to the level of living. This is very evident when one realizes that nations with low levels of living usually have poor systems of agricultural education.

Level of Living of Individuals

The level at which a person lives is determined by the overall level of living in the country in which he lives and by the kind of work he does. In countries with low overall levels of living, individuals are more likely to live at a low level. Likewise, the reverse is true in countries with higher levels of living, such as the United States.

Within the United States, the level at which an individual or family lives is determined by the kind of work the individual does. The work, or occupation, of an individual to a great extent determines the amount of money available. Money is necessary to buy the goods and services required for living. The kind of occupation may result in certain business contacts

which dictate level of living. For example, a medical doctor associates with other doctors. Many medical doctors have similar levels of living because of the prestige, income and social pressure from their peers. Commonly, in the United States, this is known as "keeping up with the Joneses."

Unfortunately, some people attempt to live at a higher level than their incomes will permit. Certain luxuries may be purchased when, in fact, the money would have been more wisely spent on necessities. In such situations, an unreal level of living is created. The family may experience financial difficulties and be unable to pay its bills.

5. How do people view work?

People have different views of work. These views are rooted in ethics. Ethics establish how people will act and includes moral values and duties. These gradually develop over a period of many years. Changes are made slowly. All of man's actions toward and with his fellow man are regulated by ethics. Areas in which strong ethics have developed are religion, sex, and work.

"Work ethics" are concerned with how people view work. Attitudes toward work vary and individuals have different views of the meaning of work. Likewise, the overall view of work varies from one country to another.

View of Work in the United States

Work is a natural and integral part of life in the United States. Much of the work ethic is rooted in religion. Many people contend that everyone should work. The person who does not work may be considered a burden on society. Of course, exceptions are made for those who are old, very young, or handicapped.

Some cities and states have laws to encourage work. These are known as "vagrancy laws." Persons who cannot prove they have enough money to support themselves may be jailed. These laws usually are not strictly enforced.

The work ethic may vary slightly within the country. People living in different regions may have slightly different views of work from those in other regions. The differences are not great and are smaller today than a century ago. Wealthy persons may view work differently from poor persons. If, however, the wealth is suddenly lost, the attitudes of such people toward work may signficantly change. Many of them will have to find new places for themselves in the world of work.

Ideas toward work are handed down from father to son. Changes do occur but only gradually. A change currently taking place is concerned with the role of women. Traditionally, the work of women has been in the home. Women are now taking jobs outside the home. They are entering occupations formerly reserved for men, including various areas of agriculture. Part of this change has been brought about by organized women's liberation groups. This is known as the "lib movement."

Most people like to work. They like the work ethic. In reality, the work ethic has contributed to the development of the country. Pioneers had to work to clear land and construct trails. The industrial revolution made it possible for man to be more productive. Machinery reduced the burden and drudgery of work. Much of the progress in the United States has been due to the attitudes and willingness of the people toward work.

Views of Work in Other Countries

The people in many countries view work similarly to those in the United States. The views in Canada and Europe do not differ greatly. There are countries, however, where work is viewed differently.

Work was considered evil in the ancient world. The Greeks and Romans of old thought that the gods hated man. Out of spite the gods forced man to work. In an attempt to avoid work, the richer people kept slaves. All who could avoided physical work.

Today in a few countries men are not the main workers. Women do most of the work. The men stay near the house and assume the housekeeping role. These countries in general are not highly developed. The citizens usually have a low level of living.

Work is not highly developed in primitive countries. In such places, no crops are grown. The people tend to roam around in tribes and live off the land. These people lack many of the modern conveniences that others have to enjoy. Also they frequently have a shorter life span because medical services are not available and dietary needs are not met.

Work ethics are influenced by how the government functions. In certain countries all work is for the government. The goods and services belong to it. Government stores sell what is produced, keeping any profit for its treasury. This is different from the system of capitalism and free enterprise in the United States. Here individuals may operate stores and keep any profit for themselves. Of course, they must pay taxes on the profit!

6. Why should youth study about work?

Many kinds of work are found in the United States. In fact, close to 35,000 different occupations are known to exist. A majority of these require specific education and training. Also, work changes. New technological advances require persons in certain occupations to learn new skills. Additional education and training may be required. If a person in an occupation

fails to learn the new skills, he will soon fall behind and may be replaced by one who did learn. It is obvious that youth have many opportunities and challenges ahead of them. They will need facts with which to make decisions.

Youth can learn much from a study of the world of work. With the average life expectancy of 67.0 years for men and 74.2 years for women, many years of productive life lie ahead of every young person. The concern of most persons is to make the most of their lives. Every young person will have to make certain decisions. One of these is concerned with the kind of career to pursue. Decisions can be made more realistically if one knows about occupations.

Young people must also know something about themselves. Interests, attitudes, and capabilities must be considered in selecting an occupation. Some occupations require considerable education and training. A knowledge of where the education can be obtained and how much it will cost is important Consideration must also be given to the assets available; that is, the amount of money available to pay for the education.

Learning about agricultural occupations should be of value in planning for the future. A career area should be selected on the basis of a rather thorough knowledge of the world of work. Since many persons are unhappy with their first job or area of study, consideration should be given to personal traits.

Students going to college need to be realistic in selecting an area of study. In effect, the area of study should be selected on the basis of career interests. Persons interested in agricultural careers should choose to study an appropriate area of agriculture. Certain areas of study have been glamorized. For example, engineering is glamorized at some universities.

Occasionally, students enter this area of study without considering what is involved. After one or two quarters in which a thousand dollars or more have been spent for tuition, the student begins to realize that engineering is not for him. He changes to some other area in which he is happier. In the meantime, he has taken courses which may not apply to the new area. He may have received low or failing grades and, possibly, have been placed on probation. He may have to attend one or more additional quarters beyond what is normally required to earn a degree.

Students going to vocational schools need to be able to select the area in which they want to receive training. Consideration should be given to the opportunities available after training. There is great demand and prestige for skilled persons in certain occupations. The period of training is usually less than that required for a college degree. Through a study of the educational requirements for entering various occupations, young people will be assisted in developing their plans.

For youth not desiring to continue their education after high school, a knowledge of occupations will be helpful. Studying the world of work will assist in obtaining the first job, working well on the job, and advancing. Many successful people have not had education beyond high school, but the trend is in favor of those with additional education.

Some high schools have classes in which work is studied and explored. In these classes students study about jobs. Field trips, movies, laboratory exercises, and other activities are included. These activities are designed to let students know what it is <u>really</u> like to work in various jobs. The teachers coordinating these activities are usually specially trained in some occupational or guidance area. Many schools also have counselors who are available to assist youth in learning about work.

6. Why is it necessary to plan a career?

Career planning is one of the most important problems which youth face. It should start early. Students need to begin thinking of their careers while in elementary school. The last two years of high school may be spent in specific career preparation. High schools usually offer students a choice of subjects. Subjects may be vocational, college preparatory, or a part of general education. Careful consideration should be given to the courses taken. Regardless of the selections, however, the courses taken will ultimately contribute to career development.

Career plans need not be rigid but should allow for change. The changes may be brought about by the development of new interests, financial ability, demand for workers, and other factors. The average worker may change jobs six to eight times during his working career. These changes are normally from one occupation or job to another and do not represent a change in the overall career. Individuals who have made proper career plans will be less likely to change careers. Career planning also aids individuals in advancing in the chosen area.

There are several considerations in planning a career. Probably the most important is that one knows and understands himself. An individual should give careful consideration and honest appraisal to his personal traits. This appraisal should be complete and thorough. A knowledge of one's self will make career planning more meaningful and, above all, more accurate.

The actual process of career planning begins with securing information about occupations. Acquisition of occupational information should be started early in life and be continued throughout a career. Such information is available from different sources, including parents, friends, newspaper

articles, teachers, and counselors. One must evaluate information from the various sources. Some career information may be misleading if it is oriented toward recruiting persons into the career being discussed. All occupational information must be read and interpreted with this in mind.

Individuals who do not plan their careers may wander aimlessly in the world of work. Also, persons who make selections and later change their minds may find that time and money have been lost in securing unnecessary education or training.

It is possible to compare a career with an automobile trip. Suppose a person wants to take a trip in an automobile. If the place is one to which he has never been before, he will want to plan his trip. A road map will be needed. On the map, it will be necessary for him to determine where he is presently located and where he wants to go. The next step is to plot the trip carefully. The best highways and shortest route will be chosen. After the trip is started additional information may be obtained along the way. If the new information results in a better route, the travel plans will be changed.

The same general approach tends to be as true in career planning as in planning a trip. Individuals should carefully plan their careers and required education. As new insight is gained along the way, career plans may change.

8. What is career education?

Career education is a new term which has become popular in recent years. It refers to providing information about work in all levels and areas of education. Children in the lower elementary grades are introduced to occupations. In the middle grades students may become involved in exploratory work-activities. In secondary school, specific preparation for entering an occupation may begin.

Youth can profit from career education. They can use their background of learning and exploration to select a career. An appropriate training-education program leading to the career can be selected. It is very likely that many of today's workers would have chosen different careers if they had known about the world of work.

Questions to Discuss

1. What needs of man are met through work?
2. How can an unemployed person have an occupation?
3. What is the most important fact in the level of living of the people in a nation? Why?
4. What constitutes the level of living of an individual?
5. Why is it important for youth to study and explore work?
6. What kind of work most interests you? Why?

Activities to Perform

1. Make a list of the occupations of your parents and other family members. How many of these are in some area of agriculture?
2. Interview several people who work in different agricultural occupations. Ask them about their work, including the benefits of it to society and to themselves.
3. Make a list of the goods and services you and your family use in daily living. Indicate which are necessities and which are luxuries. You may choose to make two columns on a sheet of paper as shown below.

Goods and Services My Family Uses

Necessities	Luxuries

4. Does your future include a career in some area of agriculture? Write a short paper entitled "My plans for the Future." Keep this paper and revise it as your plans change.

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